2: Schaden--77 E-4,5 (1946-1954)1962 SM4 Guarani SM4

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# Chapter V

## Individual and Family

### 1. Childhood and the formation of the personality

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[858] The Guaranĺ child is characterized by a remarkable spirit of independence. To the extent that his physical development and mental experience allow, he participates in the life, the activities, and the problems of the adults. It is understandable that such might prove to be true in epochs prior to accelerated acculturation, in which there was great cultural stability in the tempo and fixity of patterns, a state of affairs in which the conflict between the generations would be practically null. As the phenomenon persists, unaltered, through all the phases of the acculturative process, it reflects a fundamental or essential trait of the Guaranĺ culture that shows itself constant as long as the latter is able to exist. Such a characteristic is respect for the human personality and the notion that it develops independently and freely in each individual, without there being any possibility of interfering in any decisive manner in the process. As far as the psychic and moral development of the person is concerned, the Guaranĺ does not believe at all in the utility and efficacy of educational methods, aside from exceptional ones or by magical means. Treated like adults, Guaranĺ children are more frank and [855] less retiring than they are, when in contact with foreigners.

It happens that children, even those of a very young age, stay alone in the house all day long, when the father is hunting or goes "to look at the traps" in the forest, and the mother is [857] working on some distant clearing. The little ones spend as they please the money that they receive as alms on the occasion of the journeys on which they accompany their parents to São Paulo or some other city. This and many similar facts characterize the atmosphere in which the child develops, breeding in it a feeling of autonomy and independence /68/ which cannot but lead it to a behavior in many senses identical to that of its parents.

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155 This in part explains the fact that there is almost no Guaraní childish culture. There are few games that are not reduced to an imitation of the adults' activities. The Mbüá boy already at the age of three begins to practice the handling of the bow and arrow (1);

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1. /The notes for Ch. V appear on p. 84 in the original source./ Some bows and arrows of childish type, acquired among the Mbüá of Rio Branco and given to the Cadeira de Psicologia Educacional /Chair of Educational Psychology/ (Universidad de São Paulo), are half as long as the weapons of the adults, being made of the same material. The bows, of biconvex cut, are strung with embira and adorned with plaiting of mbopará type (taquara /a very strong cane/ and imbé) in traditional patterns; the arrows, with points of monkey bone (káiguasú) or of brejaúba, the black wood out of which the arrow of the adults is also made, are not provided with barbs, but display the common feathering. -- In the coastal villages, these childish weapons underwent a functional change, no longer being made today for the training of the new generation, but for commerce; many purchasers (tourists) preferring them because of the greater ease of transport.

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155 he also constructs his little traps of bamboo /Port. jiçara/ early. Among the Mbüá of Palmeirinha, I saw children play at being hunter and game, the game finally caught in the noose. The Mbüá of Rio Branco have adopted a game of cards, bisca /a game of cards played in Portugal/; men and small boys take part in it indiscriminantly.

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155 Among the rare games that do not reproduce adult activities there can be mentioned simple swings of guaimbé
524 attened in a U shape to some horizontal branch (Mbüá of
197 Itariri). But even in this respect acculturation makes itself
155 felt: the child -- perhaps attracted by the ideal that Western civilization represents, in part consciously, in part unconsciously, for the Guaraní -- begins to become interested in the games that symbolize technical progress and movement, like our city child. In the village of Rio Branco a boy makes a little airplane with the help of a taquara propeller, a cigarette package (body of the airplane), and the wax of wild bees. Another uses a calender sheet as propeller. At Araribá a Ñandéva boy builds a little truck, using a rough piece of wood and two empty spools of thread. -- These examples show that the Guaraní child
[156] is already using his own inventive spirit for the satisfaction of play activities formerly nonexistent in the traditional culture, activities that constitute innovation in the sense of representing not simply a reflection of the culture of the adults, but civilizatory elements whose significance stems from an acculturative ideal.

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155 The extraordinary respect for personality and individual
157 will, from the most tender childhood, makes the educative process, in the sense of repression, practically impossible. In
[828] the opinion of the Guaraní the tendencies of the child are nothing more than manifestations of its innate nature. A Mbüá of Xapecó used to make straw cigarettes for his two-year-old son, who, in his opinion, had been born "addicted." If on the one hand, such a form of treatment favors attitudes of boldness, independence, and autonomy in the child's personality, on the other hand it seems probable that it also accounts, at least in part, for the excessive extravagance tied to a sentimentalism that in the eyes of the occidental would be classified as morbid. In /69/ childhood the Guaraní does not learn, so to speak, to control himself and to go against his inclinations and his temperament; as an adult, he is constantly complaining about everything. And as the notion of repentance is almost inconceivable to him, he always tends to look for the cause of his sufferings in someone else and never in himself. It is clear that such a form of personality

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861 aggravates in a way the effects of cultural disintegration, as
155 well as other manifestations stemming from the situation of
157 marginality.

856 To the extent that the adult concerns himself with the development of the child, his interference is directed almost
[846] exclusively toward growth and physical well-being. The restrictions to which the father submits in the couvade and before that bear above all on the physical well-being of the newborn
856 baby. The magic means that are put into practice during child-
789 hood are of a therapeutical and prophylactic nature. To avoid
825 having toads form in the baby's mouth, there is hung around its neck a small cloth with seven "little toads" (probably tadpoles).
[170] Such usage, observed among the Ñandéva of Araribá and probably of caboclo origin, is analogous to that of tying around each leg of the child a string with miçangas /not italicized in the original/ and rings from the leg of a saracura bird, "in order to learn to walk fast" (Mbüá of Rio Branco). As we have seen
856 earlier, the Ñandéva of Bananal told me about the cold morn-
178 ing bath to which "the ancient ones" subjected the children, so
615 that they would grow up strong, a practice now abandoned.
856 Among the Mbüá of Palmeirinha I saw a baby, of male sex, with
789 a bracelet of embira provided with a knot; I was told that it was a matter of "sympathy, in order to remain strong"; obviously
[171] the reader will not fail to note the anology with the "muquira" used on the wrist by our caboclo to make the arm strong. --
856 Finally, touching upon physical existence, the children are constantly surrounded by magical protection and stimuli.

828 Regarding the soul, that is, the psychic and moral in-
856 dividuality, there are some practices of magico-educative treatment, but of secondary importance. The soul is born already finished, or at least with certain qualities virtually, so to speak, embryonic. In general, therefore, no attempt is made to force the development of the psychic nature. There are few magical remedies developed by the culture in order to influence the formation of the personality of the immature. Among the Guaraní of Dourados (both Kayová and Ñandéva, according to the information of Marçal de Souza), the parents of the newborn baby